

REMARKS

Claims 1-23 have been cancelled without prejudice. Claims 24-35 have been added.

The Applicants respectfully assert that the newly added claims are patentable over Ipson (U.S. 4,945,281). Ipson does not teach spherical spacers nor columnar spacers having a cruciform or star-shaped cross section. The primary purpose for Ipson's spacers is to divide the lamp into parallel channels. Col. 3, lines 22-26. In order to achieve this purpose Ipson's spacers must have a sufficient length to act as a barrier. In particular, Ipson states: "[d]epending on th[e] length, width and overall dimensions of the light source the barriers represented by the spacers between adjacent discharge channels may vary considerably. It is simply necessary to provide sufficiently extensive barriers to ensure that a discharge in one channel does not prevent the initiation of a discharge in an adjacent channel. " Col. 4, lines 63 et seq.

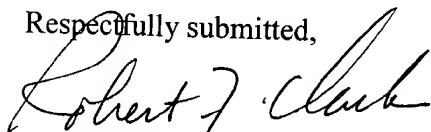
The statement of Ipson relied upon by the Examiner in making the prior rejection of claims 2-3, 4, 7-9, 12-14, 18-19, and 22-23 under 35 USC §103 must be construed in context with the above purpose. In particular, Ipson states "[o]ther techniques for adjusting the visual impact of the spacers may be used, for example, by surface treatment, adjustment to the detailed geometrical shape, construction of the spacers from semi-transparent or diffusing material etc." Col. 4, lines 27-31 (emphasis added). Ipson does not teach or suggest that any geometric shape may be used as a spacer. Instead, Ipson teaches that there can be adjustments to the detailed geometrical shape described therein. That detailed geometrical shape must serve as a barrier between discharge channels as described above. The Applicants respectfully assert that there is no teaching or suggestion in Ipson that the spherical and columnar spacers claimed by the Applicants would meet this requirement. Since the geometries claimed by the Applicants are so very different from the geometry specified in Ipson, the Applicants respectfully assert that the claimed invention is not anticipated or made obvious by Ipson.

The Applicants also respectfully disagree with the Examiner that Ipson teaches the Applicants' claimed optically diffuse surface. Ipson's suggestion that the visual impact of the spacer may be adjusted by surface treatments is nothing more than an invitation to experiment. Ipson does not provide any guidance on what types of surface treatments would be effective. "Obvious to try" is not a permissible rationale under 35 USC §103. See, MPEP §2145(X)(B). In particular, the Applicants respectfully assert that Ipson does not teach nor suggest frosting the surface of the spacer, providing microstructures comprising prisms and pyramids, or using an anti-reflection

interference layer. Furthermore, Ipson does not teach nor suggest using a white pigment in the solder glass used to connect the spacer to the vessel wall nor that the white pigment may comprise rutile (TiO_2) in an amount from approximately 1% by weight to 10% by weight. Lastly, Ipson does not teach nor suggest a spherical spacer having a hemisphere coated with a fluorescent material nor that the fluorescent coating may be thinner in the region of the bearing surface nor that a bearing surface may be optically diffuse.

In view of the foregoing amendment, it is believed that the Examiner's rejections have been overcome and that the application is in condition for allowance. Such action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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